

## Hope for the Best

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# Hope for the Best

by [SilverWing15](#)

## Summary

(prepare for the worst)

Part of the Dumpster 'verse

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She is a predator, but the Blade is a far bigger and more dangerous one.

The Blade approaches the kit with another grunt, she thinks this one is meant to serve as a thank you.

Polite of him.

“Thorough for a baker,” he says, poking through her supplies.

“Better safe than sorry,” Niki squeaks, her heart pounding in her chest. Wolves are known to kill coyotes that infringe on their territory.

Or: How Niki and Puffy met SBI

## Notes

I wasn't expecting to do a Niki backstory thing because she really didn't show up for long in One Man's Trash, but the idea came to me so here we are! It was fun to write, Niki POV my beloved. I really love her and Techno's interactions, they're so good, and her and Phil. Just Niki in general is pretty great.

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

Niki has been here her whole life. She has lived on this street, was *born* in this very shop, (though back then it was antiques, not a bakery. ) when the roads were too blocked with rubble and the battle that had left it there raging too fiercely for her father to risk taking her mother to the hospital.

Niki was born on this street, in the heart of the territorial conflicts that have raged over it for decades. She was six when the hero who claimed it then stopped by the shop on her regular patrols. She was seven when that hero was killed and the villain who'd done it took over.

They were just a small antique shop run by a sweet couple with their young daughter. The villain hadn't been a sadist, he'd left them be. Niki had only ever seen him a few times, but he was nice enough. He'd been the one to teach her how to throw her first punch.

The villain who came after him was more aggressive. His 'dues' nearly sunk them into debt trying to keep open.

He'd been replaced by a hero, and the hero by a different hero, and that hero by another villain. By the time Niki was twenty one, the street had changed hands more times than she could count.

That's why Niki prefers to keep a subtle but firm hand on her territory. She saw the way the villains and heroes conducted themselves, saw the way it affected the neighbors and her family.

She doesn't ask for money, she doesn't allow crime on her street. Her territory is a humble one, but she likes to think that it is well maintained. She keep an eye on how everyone is doing. If sometimes a bit of money disappears from a rich man's house and ends up on her street. Well. She never laid claim to the title of hero.

She is just a baker, doing her best to help her neighbors.

Sometimes, they will come and purchase some of her goods. Sometimes one of them will mention that they heard shouts and sobs from the apartment next door. Sometimes its been going on for a long time. Sometimes there are very clumsy people in those apartments. Lots of hospital visits.

Sometimes people on Niki's street disappear. Sometimes they're found drowned in the bay months later.

Deaths happen all the time in this city, there isn't much fanfare about it.

Puffy usually visits the grieving family that they leave behind. She is a kind soul, Niki's mother would have said that she had hands made for caring.

She certainly has hands made for healing.

That is why Niki maintains such a subtle grip on her street. It wouldn't do to attract too much attention. Healers are rare and coveted, and Niki has no intentions of sharing her fiancée with

some upstart supervillain.

There's only so many places to hide bodies in the bay.

Life is peaceful, idyllic, almost. As close to idyllic as it can get in this city.

Or it was.

Because now Niki has woken up at roughly *ungodly hours* because there is noise coming from her bakery downstairs. She sighs heavily and disentangles herself from Puffy's arms.

Puffy mutters in her sleep, seeking Niki's warmth. Niki offers her pillow as a sacrifice and Puffy settles back down with a murmur.

Niki grabs her water bottle and heads down the stairs. She's lived here her whole life, she knows every creaky floorboard and how exactly to open the door between the shop and the apartment above without it squeaking.

The shop is quiet.

Then, something rustles.

There's a four-legged shape on her table. Niki scowls and sets her water bottle aside. This is a job for the broom.

She snags it easily, "hey! Go on! Git! This is not your buffet, there's dumpsters outside."

The animal on the table turns and stares at her with burning red eyes.

The broom drops out of numb fingers.

She knows what that is. That's one of the Blade's--

Massive arms wrap around her, a calloused palm covers her mouth. She squeaks.

"Don't scream," a man commands. His voice is deep, rumbling through the chest that is pressed to her back. The Blade.

She exhales shakily, silently.

He grunts approvingly.

He doesn't snap her neck, doesn't let his shadow tear her guts out. Nice of him.

Niki is strong, Niki has lived on this street, in this city, all her life. She can handle a lot of things.

She can't handle the fucking *Blade*.

The Blade and his Angel are the premiere villains. Everyone has carved the city up, but at the end of the day it all belongs to *them*.

Them and their Siren.

“Relax,” the Blade says, slowly releasing her, “I’m not here to kill you. I just needed somewhere to patch myself up. I’ll be out of your hair in a minute.”

Niki cautiously takes a step away from him. He lets her go. She dares to turn around and face the Blade.

He’s a big guy, he towers over her, he dwarfs her in just about every aspect, honestly. He’s built solid, strong.

He’s also got his hand clenched around his right side. In the low light of her shop, she can see a dark stain on his white shirt.

“I have a first aid kit,” she says without really meaning to say it.

The Blade grunts questioningly and looks at her. She can’t see his face, let alone his eyes, through the skull mask, but she’s pretty sure he’s incredulous. “...that’d be appreciated,” he rumbles eventually.

Niki nods and backs away. She doesn’t want to turn her back on him again, but there’s not really many other options if she’s going to get the kit. She takes a deep breath and spins on her heel.

She can feel the weight of the Blade’s gaze on the back of her neck as she ducks under the counter. Something not-quite-but-all- *too-much* there brushes her arm as she reaches down. There is a pair of garnet red eyes watching her.

Niki yelps and jumps back. Too late she slaps a hand to her mouth. She turns her horrified gaze to the Blade. He sighs, “come on, leave her be, I think I could handle a...” he looks around the room. “Baker?”

“Baker,” Niki confirms in a whisper.

The Blade grunts.

The shadow snickers as it brushes *far too close* by her on its way back to its master. He snorts softly and tousles its ears. “Little shit.”

Niki swallows and cautiously reaches for the first aid kit again. This time her fingers don’t touch anything that shouldn’t be there.

She sets it on the table and backs away, half caution, half respect. She wonders if this is how coyotes feel with they share a water-hole with a wolf.

She is a predator, but the Blade is a far bigger and more dangerous one.

The Blade approaches the kit with another grunt, she thinks this one is meant to serve as a thank you.

Polite of him.

“Thorough for a baker,” he says, poking through her supplies.

“Better safe than sorry,” Niki squeaks, her heart pounding in her chest. Wolves are known to kill coyotes that infringe on their territory.

The stairs creak. Niki’s heart climbs up her throat. *Puffy*.

The Blade tenses, turning away from the kit. His shadows gather around him. More than she’d realized were in the room. Her breath hitches.

His hand drops to the sword at his side.

“Niki?” Puffy asks, her voice still sleepy. “You okay?”

“I’m fine,” Niki says as calmly as she can, “just remembered that there was some dough I need to get rising. I’ll be back in a minute.”

*Please, please, please*, she silently begs, *go back to sleep*.

But her powers have never touched the mental spectrum.

“I’ll come help,” Puffy says. She’s always so willing to help, Niki loves her for it but *god* is this not the time.

“I’m almost done,” Niki says, “go back to bed.” There is a thread of tension in her voice that she knows Puffy will pick up on. She winces.

Puffy is silent for a moment, and then the stairs creak again. The lower stairs.

The door opens and there is Puffy, the love of Niki’s life, in all her pajama’d glory, standing before one of the most dangerous men in the city.

“Hello,” Puffy says.

“...Hey,” the Blade grunts. He shuffles, shrugging his great shoulders in a way that almost seems...shy.

But that’s fucking dumb.

The shadows chatter amongst themselves, one of them prowls closer. Niki watches its progress, her heart pounding, Puffy is a healer. She can’t fight. Well, she can, she can throw a punch better than Niki.

A punch isn’t going to do *shit* against the Blade of his shadows.

Puffy watches the shadow too, wary, but not scared. Not as scared as she should be.

Niki glances to the Blade, hoping for some indication of what is going to play out. He’s turned back to the first aid kit, picking through delicately. He’s not even looking at them.

Does that mean he's not angry? Or that he just doesn't care enough to even watch his shadows tear them apart?

Puffy holds a hand out to the shadow and it sniffs curiously for a moment. Then it snorts and shakes its head, and wanders away to poke at Niki's mixing bowls. They clatter and fall.

"Sorry," the Blade says, "they've never been in a bakery."

"That's alright," Niki says inanely.

Puffy winds her arm around Niki's waist, holding her tightly. Niki clutches back, desperate for the reassurance that they're both still here, still alive.

"You hurt?" Puffy breathes.

"No, I'm fine," Niki replies, just as quiet.

The Blade is disinfecting his wound. With his shirt lifted, Niki can see that it's not a long gash, but it's definitely a deep one. She winces.

"That looks bad," Puffy says. Niki squeezes her hand tightly in warning, but she doesn't even glance at her.

The Blade looks at her for a long moment, then grunts again.

His shadows are constantly whispering, talking to each other, but the man himself is pretty quiet.

They all jump when the door to the alley opens. "Hey mate," someone whispers, "you--oh. Uh. Evening ladies."

The Angel of Death is now in her shop. Niki feels her knees go a bit weak. Puffy holds her up. "Hello," she says softly. Despite the death grip she has on Niki's hand, her voice is even and steady. "Nice night, huh?"

The Angel of Death laughs softly, "it's not too bad. Bit chilly for my tastes."

"The A/C is broken upstairs, this is perfect for us."

The Angel hums, "Yeah, bet." He steps further into the shop like that was all the invitation he needed. It was probably less invitation than he needed. He goes to the Blade's side, the shadows part, but just as quickly converge around him. They tug on his robes, press their heads into his hands.

"Yes, hi," he says to them distractedly. "You alright mate?"

"Flesh wound," the Blade replies dismissively. "I'll be fine."

"Your definition of 'flesh wound' is a bit untrustworthy mate."

There is another sound from the alley door. Another man pokes his head in, “What are you two doing--oh. Hey.”

Siren.

Great.

All three of the most dangerous villains in the city are in her bakery at four AM. This is perfect. This is great. Niki isn't panicking at all.

Puffy's grip is about to break her hand, she's pretty sure.

“Nice night,” Siren offers.

“Yeah,” Niki agrees faintly.

“You guys have got to quit just breaking into places,” Siren says, “its rude.”

“We're supervillains,” The Blade grouses.

“I'm sorry about them, they have no manners,” Siren says, a charming smile on his face.

“Neither does Niki, its alright,” Puffy says. There's a hint of waver in her voice.

The three most dangerous supervillains in the city laugh in her shop at four AM while the Angel of Death stitches up the Blade's side. Niki glances to the clock. Four forty-five, AM, actually.

“Um,” she says hesitantly.

“What's up mate,” the Angel asks casually.

“I need to get started on stuff,” she says in a near whisper, “I--you can stay but I'm just gonna, get to work?”

The Angel blinks, “oh, yeah, sure thing. We'll clear out soon, thanks for letting us use your kit.”

Usually, Niki wouldn't do her baking in her pajamas. She makes an exception for today. Its calming, to go through the familiar routine of making dough with Puffy at her side. Even with the Blade's shadows watching her every move with burning eyes, even with the murmur of the three most dangerous men in the city behind her.

“You really start this early?” Siren asks, he's drifted away from his partners to lean on the counter. He's not close, not in arm's reach, but he's *closer*.

“I like to have things fresh for the new day,” Niki says quietly. She swallows. This is her city, this is her street, this is her fucking *shop*. She is not a doormouse.



She straightens her spine, lets her shoulders fall from around her ears as she adds flour to the liquids and starts bringing the dough together. The three most dangerous men in the city are a surprisingly subtle presence once she stops trying to listen for an attack.

“You’re a fighter,” the Blade pipes up suddenly.

Niki flinches and whirls on him, how the *fuck* had he known that? And more importantly how does she answer that in a way that won’t set him or the other two off.

“It’s the way you walk,” the Blade says, and for a heart stopping moment Niki is afraid she said those thoughts out loud.

Puffy turns on the tap, even though they don’t need to add more water to the dough.

“I’ve taken a few classes,” Niki tries, “self defense you know?”

The Blade grunts and levels her with a disbelieving look.

Siren laughs, “yeah, no, he’s too good for that. Sorry.”

Niki draws into herself. She can feel the flow of the water, but she doubts that getting a little wet would do much to dissuade these three. She could use ice, but the minute one of them is down, the other two will be on her.

“Just curious,” the Blade says, “doubt you’re a hero, since you’re letting us use your kit.”

“No,” Niki confirms, “I’m not.”

“Water powers?” The Angel asks mildly, glancing with an amused expression to Puffy.

“Yes,” Niki chokes out.

“Cool,” the Blade grunts, and then he stands.

Her heart jumps and she is so sure that he is about to strike her down. Instead he sweeps the wrappers of the stuff he used from the first aid kit into his hand.

The Angel of Death shuts the kit and follows the Blade as he heads for the door, Siren on their heels. “Thanks for letting us stop by!” he chirps, and then the door closes behind them.

They’re gone.

The shadows are still and silent. No eyes. No whispers.

They’re gone, and they are alive.

Niki falls to her knees.

Puffy wraps her arms around her and they just...sit on the floor for awhile.

The bakery doesn’t open that day.

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They can't stay closed forever. Despite the three most dangerous supervillains in the city knowing their location and at least some part of her activities.

So they open, and they do their usual business. Niki waits for a bit before she goes out again-she's never patrolled often, but she can't let her territory appear abandoned. She watches the shadows carefully, but none of them sprout eyes or whisper to her.

There is no sign of the Blade, or the Angel.

But Siren shows up three days later. In the middle of the day, charming smile on his lips.

"Morning," he chirps. The shop is empty except for them.

"Good morning," Niki says warily. Puffy is in the back, thankfully.

Siren's smile falters a little, "I'm not here to start shit," he says, "I just wanted to stop by. Maybe try some of those strawberry things?"

There's a boyish sort of hope on his face, a sheepish, cautious type. Siren is her age, maybe a couple years older than her. She wonders what its like, living his life.

She wonders if its a little lonely.

"They're raspberry, actually," she says, "but I've been trying to do some strawberry stuff, want to be my taste tester?"

## End Notes

You can find me on tumblr at technobladesbasement

If you're inspired to create anything based on my fics, art, writing, interperative dance you have full permission to do it. Inspiring other people to do stuff is my favorite thing.

If you saw typos no you didn't <3

I love comments but I am shit at replying to them, sometimes Maddie or Zambo will reply for me because they are blessed, wonderful people who know I have so much anxiety. So much. but I love all comments regardless and I thank everyone who leaves me one, they brighten my day

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!